

If you find you need help with establishing paternity or child support:

1. Talk to your parents. They can help you sort things out and determine what to do.
2. Talk to a favorite teacher or counselor.
3. Call the Division of Child Support.
4. Talk to a private attorney about your options.

If you have questions about teen parenting, establishing paternity, or collecting child support, please contact your private attorney or a Division of Child Support office. Visit the DCS Internet website at: <http://www.wa.gov/dshs/dcs>

Headquarters	(800) 457-6202
Seattle DCS	(800) 526-8658
Tacoma DCS	(800) 345-9976
Everett DCS	(800) 729-7580
Yakima DCS	(800) 441-0859
Spokane DCS	(800) 345-9982
Olympia DCS	(800) 345-9964
Wenatchee DCS	(800) 535-1113
Vancouver DCS	(800) 345-9984
Kennewick DCS	(800) 345-9981
Fife DCS	(866) 243-4449

Other Suggested Resources For Unmarried Parents

Check your local phone directory for these resources:

Local Community Clinic

Local County Health Department

Crisis Clinic Hotline

Childbirth Information Line

Pregnancy Aid

Options for Pregnancy

Planned Parenthood

County Multi-Service Center

Children's Home Society

LDS Community Services

Catholic Community Services

Mental Health Centers

DSHS Public Assistance Office

Check the "Community Services Numbers" section in your telephone directory.

What Every Teenager Needs To Know About Paternity & Child Support



Division of Child Support



Division of Child Support

Being a parent can be a wonderful and fulfilling experience.

But parents also have many responsibilities. They must provide their children with food, clothing, a place to live, education, medical care, and love.

These responsibilities can be hard when you are an adult and married. They are even harder when you are a teen and unmarried.

1. What is Paternity?

Paternity is the legal establishment of fatherhood.

2. Why should paternity be established?

- So the child can receive financial and medical support from both parents.
- So the child can receive emotional support from both parents.
- So the child knows who its father is.
- So the child can receive Social Security and insurance benefits if the father is hurt or killed.
- So the child has access to the father's health history.

3. How is paternity established?

Paternity is established through a court order, a paternity affidavit or marriage.

4. What is a paternity affidavit?

A paternity affidavit is a legal document signed by both parents, usually in the hospital, where the alleged father agrees he is the father of the child. Paternity is established immediately. Either party may rescind their signature within 60 days through a court action. After 60 days the party must prove in court he or she signed the form as a result of fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact. Paternity affidavits do not address custody or visitation.

5. How is paternity established in court?

When the Division of Child Support receives a referral or an application for services, and paternity has not been established, they send the case to the county prosecutor. The prosecutor notifies both parents and arranges for genetic testing.

6. What is genetic testing?

A swab removes genetic material from inside the cheek of the mother, father, and child. The material is then sent to a laboratory. Laboratory tests prove conclusively whether or not the alleged father is the father of a child.

7. What happens if I ignore a letter from the prosecutor?

The case will go to court anyway and you may be named legal father of the child.

8. What if genetic tests show that I am not the father?

Your case will be dismissed, and the mother will be asked to name other possible fathers.

9. How is child support set?

The court order will set child support based on both parents' incomes and according to the Washington State Child Support Schedule. If you signed a paternity affidavit, the Division of Child Support will send you a notice stating your obligation based on the Washington State Child Support Schedule.

10. How do you collect child support?

The Division of Child Support can attach the noncustodial parent's pay, even if he or she is not behind. They can also attach bank accounts, unemployment compensation, disability payments, file liens, seize cars and other property, suspend driver and other licenses, and refer cases to the prosecutor for contempt action.

11. What are the most important things I need to remember?

If you are the mom and paternity has not been established for your child, call one of the Division of Child Support offices listed in this brochure.

If you are the dad and receive a notice from the Division of Child Support or the prosecutor's office, respond immediately. If you do not respond, you may be required to pay what you cannot afford.